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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/675,825	09/29/2000	Jessica A. Aldrich	NU-98-5-1 (205-14)	9516
7590	02/26/2003			
ProPat LLC 2912 Crosby Road Charlotte, NC 28211-2815			EXAMINER HENDRICKS, KEITH D	
		ART UNIT 1761	PAPER NUMBER 12	
		DATE MAILED: 02/26/2003		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/675,825	ALDRICH ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Keith Hendricks	1761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 December 2002.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-20 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell, and Wiedmann et al., in view of the combination of Yatka et al. and Nakel et al. The references and rejection are taken as cited in a previous Office action.

Applicants' arguments filed December 06, 2002, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. At pages 4-5 of the response, applicants discuss the intended use of the claimed beverage, in that "the object of the present invention was to compensate for the fading sweetness of a peptide sweetener", rather than "to stabilize aspartame or to slow down its decomposition." The decomposition of the oligosaccharide is to compensate for the loss of sweetness from the decomposed peptide sweetener, both acts of which are due to the low pH of the beverage. Applicants state that none of the references provide a teaching of this concept, but rather the references "try to stabilize or reduce the peptide decomposition."

This is not deemed persuasive for the reasons of record. As previously stated on the record, the "discovery" of a property of a composition (whether it is true that applicants first "discovered" it or not), is not synonymous with an "invention". The fact that applicants may have recognized another advantage which would flow naturally from following the suggestion of the prior art cannot be the basis for patentability when the differences would otherwise be obvious. See *Ex parte Obiaya*, 227 USPQ 58, 60 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985). Whether the oligosaccharides (inulins, oligofructose or fructans) act to (a) stabilize the peptide sweetener from decomposing, or (b) act as a substrate supply that, when decomposed themselves, serve to compensate for the decomposition of the peptide sweetener, is irrelevant to the claimed *composition*. Simply because applicants theorize (or even "discovered") that the action of the oligosaccharides in the beverage is (b) as stated above, rather than (a), this does not change the fact that the combination of references as cited of record, would have provided ample guidance and motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to have produced the invention that is instantly claimed. The referenced

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product would be the same as that claimed, absent any clear and convincing evidence and/or arguments to the contrary.

Conclusion

* NOTE: The previous rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) of Hoek et al., is withdrawn, in view of applicants' arguments.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Keith Hendricks whose telephone number is (703) 308-2959.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano, can be reached at (703) 308-3959. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3602.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.



KEITH HENDRICKS
PRIMARY EXAMINER